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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Report of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities

(United Nations Office at Vienna, 2-4 February 2000)

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I. Introduction

1. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities held its twentieth session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 2 to 4 February 2000. V. Kozharnovich of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) was elected Chairman. The list of participants is attached as annex II to the present report.

2. The Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs opened the Meeting, thanking all participants for their contributions to the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held in Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999. She noted the importance of the work done in the Inter-Agency Meeting towards advancing fundamental principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, including the promotion of international cooperation. She stressed that at the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) Member States had recommended that coordination of space-related activities in the United Nations system be strengthened and that innovative methods, including information technology, be used to make the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system more useful to the General Assembly.

3. The Meeting adopted the agenda contained in annex III to the present report.

II. Substantive questions considered at the Meeting

A. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas (agenda item 4)

1. Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of the activities of organizations of the United Nations system in the area of space science and technology and its applications as they relate to their mandated programmes (agenda item 4 (a))

4. The Secretary of the Meeting briefed participants on the outcome of UNISPACE III and on the work of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies during 1999, bringing to the attention of the Meeting the recommendations of UNISPACE III relating to the inter-agency coordination in space-related activities. The Expert on Space Applications reported to the Meeting on the future orientation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and activities planned within the context of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. He also indicated that the annual plan of activities of the Programme would be brought to the attention of the organizations of the United Nations system, along with an invitation to participate in those activities of interest to them.

5. The representatives of the organizations reported on their current activities and plans for 2000, 2001 and beyond. An exchange of views followed regarding how best to coordinate future activities.

6. The Meeting noted with appreciation an invitation extended by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for participation of other organizations in the upcoming International Conference for Information and Decision Support Tools for Environmental Management, including as joint sponsors and organizers.

7. The Meeting also noted with appreciation an invitation extended by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to other organizations to participate in the regional seminar on the development of space technology applications for the second phase of the Regional Space Applications Programme, to be held in Bangkok in March 2000.

8. The Meeting noted that the issue of the use of nuclear power sources would be considered during the thirty-seventh session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee under the four-year work plan adopted in 1998. The Meeting also noted that the Subcommittee's Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space would be reconvened at that session of the Subcommittee and that, in accordance with the work plan, the Working Group would identify terrestrial processes and technical standards that might be relevant to nuclear power sources, including factors that distinguished nuclear power sources in outer space from terrestrial nuclear applications.

9. The Meeting stressed that the safety of radioactive and nuclear power sources in outer space should not be treated in isolation from the existing international regime on radiation and nuclear safety. The Meeting requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to bring to the attention of the Subcommittee the view of the Meeting that the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space should take into account the international regime on radiation and nuclear safety, which consisted, *inter alia*, of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident,[1] the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency[2] and the Convention of Nuclear Safety;[3] the principles contained in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safety Fundamentals publications "Radiation Protection and the Safety of Radiation Sources", "The Safety of Nuclear Installations" and "The Principles of Radioactive Waste Management"; the "International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources"; and the IAEA Safety Series publication dealing specifically with "Emergency Planning and Preparedness for Re-entry of a Nuclear Powered Satellite". The Meeting recommended that, in conducting its work on the issue of the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, the Subcommittee enhance the involvement of IAEA and take into account the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and the International Commission on Radiological Protection.

2. Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of organizations of the United Nations system (agenda item 4 (b))

10. The Meeting had before it the draft report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system: programme of work for 2000, 2001 and future years (A/AC.105/726). It was the twenty-fourth report on the subject and contained information from organizations of the United Nations system in an integrated form, outlining planned activities by field of application.

11. The Meeting noted that, in accordance with the agreement reached during its annual session in 1984 (ACC/1984/PG/8, para. 13), the draft report currently consisted of

two major sections, one containing a summary of major planned activities and programmes, without reference to the organizations concerned, and the other a description of the future programmes of the individual organizations concerned.

12. The draft report contained information on activities and programmes involving the applications of space technology in the fields of remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS), communications and navigation, meteorology and hydrology, basic space science, safety and disaster reduction and other related fields. It highlighted activities carried out jointly by the organizations concerned through cooperative programmes and included those carried out separately within their areas of competence. For the above-mentioned fields, those activities included education and training courses, workshops, seminars and fellowships; expert services and survey missions to the countries concerned and conducting studies on pilot projects or the implementation of projects with operational applications of technology; and the dissemination or exchange of information on the status of technology or operational systems.

13. The Meeting reviewed the draft report and made suggestions and comments. The Meeting adopted the report as amended. The Meeting was informed that the final text would be made available to States members of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in document A/AC.105/726 during the thirty-seventh session of the Subcommittee, to be held from 7 to 18 February 2000.

14. The Meeting recalled its agreement at its eighteenth session that consideration should be given to the possibility of re-categorizing space-related activities to better reflect, in the annual report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of the organizations of the United Nations system, the priority areas of application being identified by Member States, including consideration of the possibility of creating a new section that would include an analytical review of the results of the coordination of activities conducted.

15. The Meeting noted with interest a proposal by the Office for Outer Space Affairs of a revised structure for the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system. The Meeting made suggestions and comments on the proposed structure of the report and agreed upon the revised structure as contained in annex I to the present report.

16. In order to prepare the next report on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system, to be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-eighth session, to be held in February 2001, the Meeting requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to prepare a first draft in accordance with the revised structure of the report on the basis of information contained in document A/AC.105/726. The Meeting also requested the Office to circulate that draft to the organizations of the United Nations system prior to the request for submission of their contributions to the report, in order for the organizations to prepare their contributions to the next report of the Secretary-General. The Meeting also agreed that it should review the revised structure at its next session, in 2001, for possible improvement.

17. The Meeting agreed that, at future sessions, it should consider under a separate agenda item methods to enhance further the inter-agency coordination of space activities.

18. The Meeting recognized that the annual report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities was a unique source of information on various space-related activities conducted within the United Nations system and agreed that the report should be disseminated widely. In that connection, the Meeting recommended that the report be made available on the web site of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and that

other United Nations bodies be encouraged to create links to the report, in order to make it widely available. The Meeting agreed that the report should continue to be utilized as a means to add value to its work in coordinating space-related activities within the United Nations system.

B. In-depth review of the cooperation of the organizations of the United Nations system in remote-sensing and related geographic information system activities: remote sensing data policy for requirements of the organizations of the United Nations system and implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21 (agenda item 5)

19. Under agenda item 5, the Meeting affirmed the continuing importance of linking institutions in the United Nations system concerned with space-related activities with those concerned with sustainable development. The Meeting noted that UNISPACE III had stressed the importance of space technology for sustainable development, including protecting the Earth's environment and managing its resources. For that reason, the Meeting expressed concern that the importance of space applications had not been sufficiently stressed in Agenda 21.[4]

20. The Meeting noted the continuing attention being given in the international community to Agenda 21 and considered it an opportunity to build awareness of the value of space technology for sustainable development. In particular, the Meeting noted with interest that in 2001 the Commission on Sustainable Development would be reviewing chapter 40 of Agenda 21, "Information for decision making", and that a major event might be held in 2002, 10 years after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.[5]

21. The Meeting agreed that it should provide input into the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development towards promoting recognition of the value of space applications for sustainable development and agreed to explore the possibility of the Commission's including an item on the matter on its agenda. The Meeting also agreed that it should contribute to any future review of relevant provisions in Agenda 21, including a review of chapter 40 in 2001, and to a possible event in 2002.

22. The Meeting agreed that the item on in-depth review of the cooperation of organizations of the United Nations system in remote sensing and related GIS activities should be kept on its agenda.

C. Enhancement of coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system through the use of advanced information technologies (agenda item 6)

23. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the process of preparing the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities had been facilitated significantly through the use of electronic mail.

24. The Meeting noted with interest a proposal submitted by the Office for Outer Space Affairs on the use of advanced information technology and agreed that it could form the

basis for discussion on that topic. In particular, the Meeting agreed that participating organizations could adopt a coordinated approach to dissemination of information regarding space activities within the United Nations system using the Internet.

25. The Meeting agreed that consolidated information on the space-related work of the United Nations system should be available via the Internet. As a first step, the Meeting agreed that a calendar of space-related events in the United Nations system, to be contained in annex I to the Secretary-General's report on the coordination of outer space activities according to the revised structure (see annex I to the present report), should be made available on the web site of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and should be updated on a regular basis from 2001 onwards. The calendar would be based on information provided by participating organizations in electronic form to the Office. Participating organizations would be free to provide any additional information on their space-related activities for inclusion in the web site of the Office and to update information concerning their organization at any time. The Office offered to create mirror sites on the home pages of interested organizations.

26. The Meeting agreed that the use of advanced information technology, such as web-conferencing, could increase the efficiency of the Inter-Agency Meeting, including the efficiency with which the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities was prepared and adopted. The Meeting noted, however, that there were technical obstacles to the immediate use of web-conferencing in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General. For that reason, the Meeting agreed that a trial use of web-conferencing would be conducted within a working group to be established before the next session of the Inter-Agency Meeting. Participating organizations of the working group would include the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the World Meteorological Organization and other organizations on a voluntary basis. The working group would report to the Inter-Agency Meeting at its next session on its experience with the use of web-conferencing.

27. The Meeting agreed that consideration of the use of information technology in order to enhance the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting should continue.

D. Review of the plan of action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and implementation of follow-up activities (agenda item 7)

28. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that various organizations within the United Nations system had contributed to the successful outcome of UNISPACE III. The Meeting also noted that UNISPACE III had placed importance on the strengthening of inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related activities, as reflected in its report,[6] in particular in "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration for Space and Human Development",[7] which had been adopted by UNISPACE III and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/68 of 6 December 1999.

29. The Meeting was informed that in resolution 54/68 the General Assembly had invited all relevant governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system responsible for space-related activities to establish an ad hoc intergovernmental advisory group to review inter-agency coordination of space-related activities with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. The Meeting noted that UNISPACE III had, in paragraph 409 (c) (i) of its report, indicated that

such an intergovernmental advisory group might consist of the chairmen of the intergovernmental bodies responsible for space-related activities of organizations of the United Nations system and might meet for one day to review inter-agency coordination.

30. However, the Meeting agreed that it was difficult to identify the governing bodies responsible for space-related activities of some organizations of the United Nations system and that no such governing body existed for certain organizations. The Meeting was of the view that the recommendation to establish an ad hoc intergovernmental advisory group should be reformulated. In that connection, it recommended that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in reviewing the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, establish a working group to examine the matter and in particular to consider the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system taking fully into account the Secretary-General's report on the subject. Additionally, the Inter-Agency Meeting should apprise the working group, once established, of the working methods of the organizations of the United Nations system that undertook space-related activities.

31. The Meeting agreed that its work should be brought more prominently to the attention of the heads of organizations of the United Nations system. In that connection, the Meeting agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should explore the possibility of requesting the Administrative Committee on Coordination to resume its consideration of the item on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system.

32. The Meeting agreed that consideration of the item should continue at its next session.

III. Future programme of work

33. The Meeting reiterated the importance of its continuing to meet on an annual basis in order to ensure better coordination of activities relating to outer space within the United Nations system. The Meeting was informed that the States members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had placed more emphasis on the importance of inter-agency coordination of space-related activities. In that connection, the Meeting agreed that the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should fully utilize the information provided in the report of the Inter-Agency Meeting and in the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities to assist them in their work in promoting inter-agency coordination of space-related activities. The Meeting also agreed that both reports should be made available in advance of the annual session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and that the Inter-Agency Meeting should meet at least a few weeks before the annual session of the Subcommittee.

34. The Meeting agreed that at its next session, in 2001, it should consider the following items:

1. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas:

(a) Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in the area of space science and technology and its applications as they relate to their mandated programmes;

(b) Methods to strengthen further inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related activities;

(c) Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of organizations of the United Nations system.

2. In-depth review of the cooperation of organizations of the United Nations system in remote sensing and related geographic information system activities: implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21.

3. Enhancement of coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system through the use of advanced information technologies.

4. Review of the plan of action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and implementation of follow-up activities.

5. Other matters.

35. The participants agreed that they should continue their review of cooperation between organizations of the United Nations system in priority areas of space applications as reflected in the revised structure of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities, in order to ensure that the activities of the United Nations system in those areas were meaningfully integrated and that the services rendered to Member States fully met their requirements in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

36. The Meeting agreed that its next session should take place in Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2001.

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1439, No. 24404.

[2] Ibid., vol. 1457, No. 24643.

[3] IAEA INFCIRC/449.

[4] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution I*, annex II.

[5] See ENERGY/1999/7.

[6] *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3).

[7] Ibid., chap. I, resolution 1.

Annex I

Revised structure of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system

I. Introduction

- Background of the coordination report
- Scope and structure of the report
- Space applications in the context of environment and sustainable development

II. Participants in outer space activities of the United Nations system and matrix of outer space programmes

III. Policies and strategies pertaining to coordination of space-related activities

- Policies and strategies of the United Nations system
- Implications for inter-agency coordination
- Mechanisms to improve inter-agency coordination further (including memoranda of understanding)

IV. Current space-related activities

A. Protecting the Earth's environment and managing resources

1. Advancement of Earth science (including research activities relating to geology, climatology, oceanography, meteorology and hydrology)
2. Monitoring and assessing the Earth's environment
3. Management of natural resources

B. Using space applications for human security, development and welfare

1. Enhancing capability for disaster reduction (including activities relating to prevention, early warning, mitigation of the impacts of natural or anthropogenic disasters, risk assessment, emergency relief, search and rescue, and rehabilitation)
2. Enhancing economic, social and cultural security (including activities relating to food security, monitoring cultivation of illicit crops, eradication of poverty and public health/medical services)

C. Utilizing and facilitating information and communications technology for development (including regulations concerning the use and allocation of orbital position/spectrum and information networking)

D. Using and improving satellite positioning and location capabilities (including applications of navigation satellites for land/sea/air transportation and travel and mapping and research activities, but excluding applications for emergency relief operations (see sect. B))

E. Building capacity for space applications for sustainable development (educational and training activities that do not necessarily focus on the subjects listed in sect. A-D, awareness- and institution-building and promotion of space science and technology)

F. Advancing scientific knowledge of space and protecting the space environment

G. Other activities

V. Review of matters related to the coordination of activities within the United Nations system

A. Status of inter-agency coordination

B. Experiences gained, lessons learned and recommendations

Annexes

I. Calendar of significant events (title, date and venue)

II. List of significant outputs (a few selected outputs per organization, including URL addresses whenever possible)

Annex II

List of participants at the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held in Vienna from 2 to 4 February 2000

Chairman: V. **Kozharnovich** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)

Secretary: T. **Chiku** (Office for Outer Space Affairs)

United Nations Secretariat

Office for Outer Space Affairs	M. Othman S. Camacho P. Lála S. Chernikov C. Davies
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	X. Bouan
Economic Commission for Africa	A. Gulaid
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	N. Ratanavong
United Nations Environment Programme	R. G. Witt

Specialized agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	He Changchui
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	M. Abtahi R. Missotten
World Meteorological Organization	D. Hinsman
World Intellectual Property Organization	T. Miyamoto
United Nations Industrial Development Organizations	M. Nogueira da Silva
International Atomic Energy Agency	A. J. Gonzalez D. Delattre

Annex III

Agenda of the twentieth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (Vienna, 2-4 February 2000)

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of the Chairman.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas:
   (a) Discussion of current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of the activities of organizations of the United Nations system in the area of space science and technology and its applications as they relate to their mandated programmes:
      (i) United Nations Programme on Space Applications;
      (ii) Programmes of other organizations;
   (b) Consideration of matters to be included in the report of the Secretary-General on the programme of work of organizations of the United Nations system.
5. In-depth review of the cooperation of the organizations of the United Nations system in remote sensing and related geographic information system activities: remote sensing data policy for requirements of the organizations of the United Nations system and implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21.
6. Enhancement of coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system through the use of advanced information technologies.
7. Review of the plan of action of the Third United Nations conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) and implementation of follow-up activities.
8. Other matters:
   (a) Future meetings;
   (b) Additional matters.